

**REMARKS:**

Claims 22-28 are in the case and presented for consideration.

The title has been amended to better describe the invention and avoid the use of the term "novel" in the title.

The specification was objected to for incorrect symbols displayed adjacent temperatures. The problem appears to be as a result of a technical malfunction with the Office's electronic filing program. The degree symbol "°" was translated by the Office's software at some point after filing by applicant to include an accented "A" symbol with the degree symbol. Applicant was unaware of the problem because applicant's XML format copy of the application as filed on March 8, 2002 printed with the correct degree symbol only.

However, in order to ensure the application is presented properly, a substitute specification is provided herewith with the correct degree symbol notation. The published application has been used to make the marked up copy in accordance with the requirements of 37 C.F.R. 1.125(b) and (c).

The other objections noted by the examiner are addressed in the substitute specification as well, including providing the parent patent number in the cross-reference, and removing the term "novel" used to describe some compounds.

No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-21 have been canceled in favor of new claims 22-28, which applicant believes are patentable over the cited references in view of the suggestions of the examiner in the last action. Claims 22-28 include three independent claims: claims 22, 24 and 27, each reciting a slightly different version of the epoxy hardener of the invention and each of which includes trimethylolpropane (TMP) combined with two other components.

Claim 22 recites an epoxy hardener formed from TMP, imidazole and a tetramethylguanidine adduct (TMGA). The TMGA is more clearly defined as being comprised of an adduct formed as a reaction product of tetramethylguanidine (TMG) and one of a monoepoxide, a diepoxide, a phenol, and a dihydric phenol and formaldehyde. The listing of compounds used to form the adduct are found in paragraph 159 of the specification. In paragraph 160 and following, applicant described a preferred one of the compounds for forming the TMGA – diglycidylether. Claim 23 recites the TMGA is formed as a reaction product with diglycidylether.

Claim 24 recites the epoxy hardener formed by combining TMP and TMGA as in claim 22, with a trihydric compound having the structure previously recited in claim 20. Claims 25 and 26 more particularly recite a specific trihydric compound (BHMC) and the diglycidylether adduct component, respectively.

Claim 27 is directed to an epoxy hardener like in claim 24, except that TMG is used in place of TMGA. Thus, in claim 27, the composition is formed by TMP, TMG and a trihydric compound with the recited structure. Claim 28 recites the trihydric compound is BHMC.

Applicant believes that the epoxy hardener compositions now recited in claims 22-28 are both novel and non-obvious from the cited prior art. As stated in the action, the prior art does not disclose the TMGA. Since each of the compositions recited in claims 22-26 include TMGA, those compositions must be novel and non-obvious. With respect to the composition of claim 27, none of the prior art teaches the combination of a trihydric compound as claimed with TMG and TMP.

Therefore, the application and claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and favorable action is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

If any issues remain which may be resolved by telephonic communication, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the number below, if such will advance the application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Conklin', written over a horizontal line.

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